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IRISH MIST 'D SUNSHINE

A BOOK OF BALLADS

JAMES B. DOLLARD
(SLIAV-NA°-MON)

Irish Mist and Sunshine

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Irish Mist & Sunshine

A BOOK OF BALLADS

By

JAMES B. DOLLARD
(Sliav-na-mon)

With an introduction by
William O'Brien, M. P.

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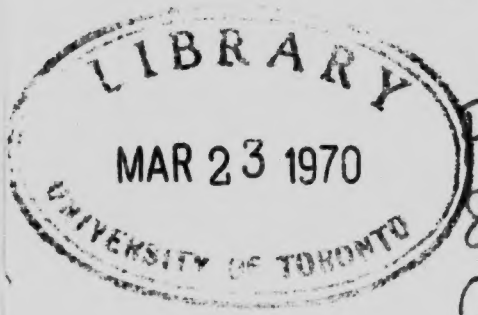

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Dedication

To my Brother

The Rev. WILLIAM DOLLARD
Church of the Holy Rosary
St. Stephen, N. B.

a lover of Ireland and her literature, whose teachings and encouragement have always been my greatest aid, this book of Irish ... e is affectionately dedicated.

The Author

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PREFACE.

The Irish priest who is also a poet commands a range of emotions which are inaccessible and almost inconceivable to the decadent versifiers who have made the phrase "The Minor Poets" a term of contempt. There is, as in the great days of poetry, something of the divine in his calling. He is privileged, as is no other man, to enter the Holy of Holies of the Irish soul, which contains a virgin mine of passion, pathos, mirth and tragedy still awaiting the poet's alchemic touch. The surprising thing is that so few Irish priests have yet turned to account for the enrichment of literature the wealth of human interest and feeling which lies around the poet-priest in the wildest mountain parish. The brooks that babble around his daily path make music, and there is no cabin whose blue peat-smoke perfumes the moors around his chapel that could not yield up its little lyric or its tale of deep and haunting pathos. Two Irish priests are at this moment setting the example of what men who combine literary ardour with a pas-

sionate love of their people can do to give the world some glimpse of the charms of the true Irish temperament, horizon, and spirit-world. Father P. A. Sheehan's famous book, "My New Curate" gives perhaps the boldest as well as the truest picture ever painted of the Irish priest and of his people, in habit as they live. Father Dollard, the author of this book of lyrics treats Irish life and sentiment through the more glowing medium of verse, and with the intensified passion of an exile from his native land. The grass-grown Irish villages, whose very names set his thoughts to music, appear to him through an enchanted atmosphere of recollections and regrets which gives a touch of consecration too often lost for those to whom the dull realities suggest no more than the yellow primrose did to Peter Bell.

Here and there a verse may be as frankly unadorned as the peasant cabins themselves in their homely cloaks of thatch, but every line rings true to life and home and with the tone as heartmoving as the Angelus which holds Millet's peasants in its spell. Father

Dollard moreover possesses the quality which alone is wanting among the perfections of the "New Curate" namely, a wholehearted sympathy with the national yearning of his people. The simple explanation to me at least of the dismal fate of all the more or less Anglified "New Curate's" projects for conquering the inveterate stagnation of the village life around him is his failure to appreciate the aspirations which are the people's terrestrial breath of life and the political conditions which set young men either tippling with Jem Deady, or learning the goose-step by moonlight under the command of the village tailor. Father Dollard understands the tailor as well as the tippler and sees perfectly how a healthy national enthusiasm could regulate the excesses of both and render Irish life as full of manly energy as it is of national charm and poetic sensibility. His lyrics have done very much indeed to discourage the unnatural Hegira from their native land which has tempted such myriads of the race from their wholesome mountain glens into the contamination of the

factories and the city slums in stranger lands. Nobody can well read his verses without feeling a breath of healthy air pass through the lungs, and a pleasant twitching at the heart such as effects one who in dreams in a distant clime, hears the sound of the chapel bell of his young days floating on his ears. Irish priests with the gifts of Father Sheehan and Father Dollard in their several kinds can do more to revive the power of the poet in its ancient Greek sense than the most misty-minded of the dilettanti who arrogate to themselves the credit of what is called the "Gaelic Revival." They are indeed makers and teachers, and their books leave us with cheerfuller belief in our kind.

WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

Mallow Cottage,
Westport, Ireland,
September 12, 1900.

Irish Mist and Sunshine

RHYME OF THE STILL HUNTERS.

(A Ballad of Iar-Connaught.)

It was the Gauger Regan Buie
That pensive came to bask,
One sunny day by Galway Bay,
And sat on an empty cask.

A Gauger old and stern was he,
Grim foe to fresh *poteen*,
Had sought the still o'er vale and hill;
Full steady his scent I ween.

He lit his pipe and he puffed a puff,
He spat on the salty tide.
He gazed on the blue-black Connaught Hills
Then drooped his head and sighed:

"Now, Regan Buie, what sight dost see
On the lonesome Connaught Hills?"
I see on Kylimore's swelling slopes
The smoke of whiskey stills.

I feel the peat spring to my feet,
  I scent the gorse clad waste,
I long again for crag and glen
  Where mountain rivers raced.

Full dim my sight that once was light,
  My bones are stiff and sore,
But the Connaught Hills are calling now,
  And it's off I'd be once more.

Oh, off again with the mountain men;
  I knew them one and all—
Jack Joyce that kept round Knockaniss,
  And Teig at Balnagal;

And Maelmorra Lynch, of Dalystown:
  But the keenest rogue drew breath
Was Dhiarmid Roe, of Ballinasloe,
  Sly fox and game to death.

'Twas many a day we went his way,
  Full sure to find his lair
In the Boughta Hills where smoked his stills
  On the bounds of County Clare.

And many a night, a woeful sight,
My men and I slunk home,
While down from the shadowy mountain cliffs
His mocking voice would come:—

"Ho, Regan Buie you're far to see
"My pearly mountain dew,
"I'll send you a pint with never a stint,
"First run and tested true.

"But haste you now from the mountain tracks
"Go home to Galway Town
"And say when there that I beat you fair
"For all your name's renown."

We wandered there when fields were fair
And the furze a flame of gold:
We sought again for the outlaw's den
When winter winds blew cold.

One day at last we followed fast;
The trail was straight and true;
Close was the chase till a cliff's dark face
Concealed him from our view.

High and low for a hiding place
We searched and searched again,
Till we found a rift in the granite cliff,
The door of Dhiarmid's den.

Oh chill that cave as a churchyard vault;
Our hearts had need be bold;
Black was its mouth, but the womb within
Was blacker a hundredfold.

High and steep were the stony walls
The roof was lost to view;
With shuffle and jar like thunder far
Our footfalls echoed through.

Spoke Jack Ryan, of Bansha town,
Who feared not man or ghost;
"I hear a tread on the road ahead;"
And he followed the footsteps fast.

On through the midnight mirk he went,
With never a thought or care;
But I heard the sound of a torrent's rush,
And called to him, "Beware!"

"'Ware a trap or an open cleft;"
My warning came too late;
A stumble, a cry that chilled our hearts,
And quick we knew his fate.

Thud and thud on the rocky shelves
We heard his body go,
And plunge at last in the raving flood
A thousand feet below.

Then flashed a light, and the cave was bright,
Wet gleamed each dripping ledge;
A mighty chasm our pathway barred—
Full close we viewed its edge.

Heavy and deep in sullen sweep
We heard the flood below,
But over its din a voice broke in
The challenge of Dhiarmid Roe:

"Ho, Regan Buie on your bended knee
"Pray God to save your soul;
"Your grave is a thousand feet below
"And never a bell to toll.

"Your grave is a thousand feet below—
"Your children wait at home,
"And your wife shall cry as the days go by
"For a husband ne'er to come.

"But think on the home in Galway town
"And think of child and wife
"And make me a solemn promise here,
"Your word shall buy your life.

"For never again the mountain men
"Your stealthy steps must fear.
"The crag and glen for the mountain men;
"The slope for the mountain deer?

"No more the still you'll hunt and spill,
"Or range the gorse lands high;
"Your word will hold, 'gainst glory and gold;—
"Who breaks our law must die!"

Then stout his challenge I answered back,
And spoke as man to man:
"My word won't go to Dhiarmid Roe,
"So work the worst you can.

"I'll hunt ye again by crag and glen
(God care for child and wife:)
"But, ere I give ye the pledging word
"I'll part with them and life."

Then Dhiarmid Roe spoke grave and slow;
"Your death-knell's sounding now;
"No hurrying ball your soul shall call,
"Grim fear must make you bow.

"Your grave is deep and your grave is high,
"Its walls are soundless rock;
"And never a soul shall hear you call,
"Whilst I your suff'rings mock."

He spoke and the blessed light was gone,
We groped in darkest gloom;
And we heard but the foaming flood below,
Sounding a knell of doom.

Blind on our track we floundered back,
Our folly to bemoan;
We felt our way where the passage lay,
And struck but the solid stone.

Searched we there in our heart's despair,
But ever the same we found.
Naught but the boiling depths below
And the iron rock around.

Oh, deep our grave by a hidden wave,
And far from friends and home
Where never a soul as long years roll
To breathe a prayer would come.

Then cried Ned Power of Parsontown,
My friend in raid and fray:
"We've held the front in many a brunt
"But this is the end to-day.

"Oh this is the end and worse to fear—
"My curse on Dhiarmid Roe!
"May all his flinty heart holds dear
"Rise up to work him woe."—

Heavy and slow the crawling hours,
And each one seemed a day,
In the deadly gloom of that living tomb
Our live strength ebbed away.

And when sweet visions crossed the brain
  Of homes we'd see no more,
We heard the drop of the reeking rock
  And the rumbling torrents roar.

At last a light flashed full and bright;
  'Twas sweet as breaking day,
And full in the glow stood Dhiarmid Roe
  And mocked us where we lay:

"Ho, Regan Buie, are the hounds at bay,
  "Brought up and trapped at last?
"You've had your fun of many a run,
  "But your hunting days are past.

"My curse on ye for stubborn fools!
  "Speak now the word I said;
"The riftless rock is all around
  "And the rock roof overhead.

"I'll send ye back to Galway Town
  "Where wife and children wait.
"The time g y and the end is nigh—
  "Speak nc r speak t late."

Up spoke Ned Power of Parsontown:
"Your pardon, Regan Buie:
"The word your pride forever would hide
"I'll speak for you and me.

"Oh, never again by heath and glen
(God pay thee, Dhiarmid Roe!)
"Were a whiskey still on every hill,
"On the outlaw's track we'll go.

"Were a whiskey still on every hill,
"And a scent to make one reel,
"Oh! never again on the mountain men
"Like blooded sleuths we'll steal.

"Tho' many an outlaw roam unhanged,
"Of high and low degree,
"To Dhiarmid Roe the palm must go,
"The Chief of rascals he."

Then smiled that rascal, Dhiamid Roe,
A wicked smile to see,
And said: "This day is the day indeed,
"And worth a world to me."

"The day that I baffled Regan Buie
"And brought his boasting low,
"A pint I'll brew of the mountain dew
"To treat ye ere ye go."

He bound our eyes and he led us on,
And when we looked again,
We saw the prize we had hunted long,
The daring outlaw's den.

Busy and neat, in all complete,
Vat and worm and still,
The mountaineer for many a year
Had worked them all at will.

Then Dhiarmid Roe: "Now ere ye go
"Ye'll test my mountain dew."
And loud he laughed as the potent draught
Our shaking frames thrilled through.

Oh, gay his laugh and merry his chaff,
As he showed the homeward way,
And "Regan Buie in the years to be
"You'll never rue this day.

"Oh, come again to the mountain men,
"A Government spy no more:
"Their friendship true I'll warrant you
"And welcoming hearts galore."

He said and we looked our last on him,
Then turned our faces home;
But every year to my cottage here
A stealthy cask doth come.

And writ in the ancient Gaelic tongue
This legend you may see:
"Sweet mountain dew, from Dhiarmid Roe,
To the Gauger, Regan Buie."

Oh, mellow and true that mountain dew.
Old heart and brain it thrills.
I see as I saw in days of old,
the wind-swept Connaught Hills;

I feel the peat beneath my feet;
I smell the heathery waste;
I long again for the crag and glen
where thundering torrents raced.

BALLAD OF THE COISTA GANN KOWN.*

This terrible phantom is heard passing from one graveyard to another, at the midnight hour, by the peasantry of the South of Ireland.

"Black Niall Moran, dare you cross the lone mountain,
A brand on your brow and a murder on your soul,
Ah! what shall you say when the Lord calls upon you,
For the red blood you squandered, and the life that you stole?"

"If the Lord called upon me I should reck not His summons,
Though He flung down my body to deep pits of Hell;
My strong hand has crushed out his life, whom I hated,
My long-nourished vengeance I have sated it well."

*Coista Gann Ceann—Literally, "Coach without heads."

"Black Niall Moran, 'tis a blasphemy spoken,
Lone, lone the long road athwart the mountains brown—,
Oh, 'ware you the graveyards whose portals now open
And the dread, headless horses of the Coista Gann Kown."

A curse in the midnight, and a loud laugh of scorn,
A murderer plunges in the black jaws of night,
The high gallows threatened and the pale breaking morn,
Far out over ocean should see him in flight.

But fearful his journey, the dreary winds affright him.
Sobbing, hopeless sobbing amid the branches sere
From the wood-sheltered cairn, where his victim lies staring,
The Banshee's awesome ullagon comes to his ear.

Ullagon! Ullagon! the wailing winds repeat it,
Ullagon! Ullagon! the hollow hills reply!
A rustle in the murky gloom,—the winging of a demon!
A voice in the valley—'tis a lost spirit's cry!

Black Niall Moran, where now your bold vaunting
Your brow's damp with terror.—God spare your guilty soul.
Hark! o'er the din of your scared bosom's panting,
Hear the Headless Horses, and the Dead-Coach's roll!

"Black Niall Moran, if e'er you prayed to Heaven,
Oh, pray unto the Saviour now for succor and for grace."
They come, the demon horses—sound their tramp like hollow thunder,
The lightnings of their flashing hoofs illume his ghastly face.

Ah! vainly doth he strive to pray—his pallid lips are frozen,
God's Mother, break the wicked spell that binds his body now.
His eyes must view the phantom coach, whose door is swinging open,
Within—a reeking body—'tis his victim's clotted brow!

A shriek upon the midnight air,—a rumble in the darkness,
Again the demon horses thro' the mountains speed away.
Stark dead upon the roadside, in his eyes a nameless horror,
They found Black Niall lying at the breaking of the day!

Where four roads meet they buried him when even-shades were falling;
But when night's dusky curtains on the shrinking hills drop down,
They hear the Dead Coach rushing by, and cross their foreheads saying;
"His soul must ride till judgment with the Coista Gann Kown."

THE CRUISE OF THE BLUE MAUREEN.

It was the brave ship Blue Maureen
  Swept out from Queenstown Bay,
Nor shortened sail to the rising gale
  That whipped the seas to spray.

Her skipper was Rorke, of County Cork,
  Where daring men are bred;
Dark scowling now he stood at the prow
  And scanned the skies ahead.

A smuggler free and fierce was he
  As e'er foiled revenue brand;
No storm could daunt him on the sea,
  And he feared no law on land.

He wore away to the wild sou'-west,
  He flew as the swallow flies,
Past Seven Heads, and the Galleys' crest
  To where the Three Stags rise.

He entered a lonely cove at last,
And a Spanish ship lay there;
The Blue Maureen they loaded clean
With cargo rich and rare.

And none too quick was done the trick
For as he sheered away
A gun-boat cleared the ocean swell
And stuck its nose in the bay.

Said Rorke, "The revenue-man's not built
Can fool a fox like me"—
He found a gate thro' a hidden strait,
And danced on the open sea.

"Now Revenue-man, it's catch who can"
Said Rorke, "an' we've slipped ye well,
Ho, now for a chase and a clipping race
To harbor or to hell."

The storm-gust shook the Blue Maureen
And blew her into the west
Like thistle down in the summer breeze
From Brown Knocmeldom's crest.

The skipper laughed to his flying craft,
No revenue boat was seen—
"And would they match their smoky hulks
To sail with the Blue Maureen?"

"Now lads to wind with her a bit
We'll head for port again,
See yonder cloud like a dead man's shroud,
It carries a hurricane."

They looked and the erstwhile smiling south
Grew dark—as dark as midnight.
Dusky and dun became the sun
And baleful was his light.

Black and blacker the skies became
Till a white bolt crashed o'erhead,
And out of the pall came a thunder call
Like the last trump of the dead.

"Ho! down the sails—'ware foul or slip!
And watch ye well the south
We've saved our ship from the bailiff's grip
But we've run in the devil's mouth!"

"A curse on my eyes that see no sign,
A curse on the coming blast,
T'will carry us bare to God knows where
Nor leave us a rag to mast."

He spoke, and the hissing hurricane
Drove in to show him true;
It caught the ship in a gusty grip
And blind to the north she flew.

Oh, blind she flew till the pallid crew
For fear could scarce draw breath;
Said Rorke, "this drift is steady and swift
And the end of it all is death."

"The end is death, be it long or short,
Not mine the skill to know,
Or grinding shock on a hidden rock
Or flung on a white ice-floe."

Then northward drove the Blue Maureen,
Still north a day and night,
With never a lift nor once a shift
The hurricane proved its might.

The toppling combers swept her deck,
  Hard lashed the helm-wheel strained,
The bending mast in the ruthless blast,
  Like tortured soul complained.

Said Rorke: "An angry God's above,
  And the devil is 'neath our keel,
'Tis late in the day for me to pray,
  And now I may not kneel."

"For God would scorn my puling now,
  And I may spare my breath;
See yon black wall! Ho! shipmates all!
  'Tis there—the end—and death!"

The Blue Maureen swung wide and high,
  And over the yawning waves
A rock-bound coast the vision crossed,
  They saw their waiting graves.

Black Rorke clung fast by the shaking mast,
  When sudden he was aware
A shape of fear was standing near—
  No mortal man stood there.

Steady and stark the Stranger stood,
Nor recked the reeling ship;
Then: "Dermot Rorke, you have done your work
And sailed your last sea-trip."

"Cast is the line, and the prize is mine
So now I claim your soul."
The skipper he looked to the scowling rocks,
And heard the breakers roll.

"Oh life is sweet with hell to meet,"
The skipper said with a sigh.
"I'll sell my soul when seven years roll
If now you pass me by."

"Your soul is mine," said the demon then,
"When e'er I will to take,
But now you'll sell your child as well,
And saved be for her sake.

"Her soul is bright with a wondrous light
(God's grace within her grew)
I'll take that soul when seven years roll,
And till that time spare you."

Burst from the skipper a cry of fear;
"What! take my child?" he said,
"Not for the earth and all 'tis worth
I'd sell a hair of her head."

"Oh, Lord, that rules the wind, and stirs
The deep seas with Thy breath,
In this dread hour show forth Thy power—
Save us from sin and death!"

The sinner prayed—his lips were stirred
By grace of his own child's prayer;
At a distant shrine her call was heard,
God crowned her pleading there.

Ah! none may claim Christ's aid in vain;
And now a child's weak moan
Pierces the sky and there on high
Sweet mercy claims its own.

Great is Thy saving Name, O Christ!
Afar the Tempter flies,
God's holy peace falls o'er the seas,
The storm-blast moaning dies!

By Queenstown Bay, on the sand-bars gray,
  Beached high a boat is seen;
She sails no more where deep seas roar,
  'Tis the brave ship Blue Maureen.

No more she'll breast the billow's crest
  On perilous cruise out-bound,
All peaceful now is the skipper's brow,
  God's friendship he hath found.

Death's call he waits, at the harbor gates,
  With hope God's port to see;
May skies be fair on his voyage there,
  And Christ his Pilot be!

THE BRIDGE OF ORMONDE.

(A Ballad of Kilkenny).

Ormonde's castle stones are high
  Ormonde's brazen gates are grand
Rich is the Lord of Ormond, why
  Coveted he my cot and land?

Steady and clear the river flows
  Under the Bridge of Ormonde
Out with the flood my spirit goes
  Far from the shades of Ormond
I see the home was once mine own
Desolate now its cold hearth-stone
Barren the fields and weed-o'er-grown
  Stamped with the curse of Ormonde.

"Rent or the land"! they said that day
And drove us out on the bleak highway
I cannot rest and I cannot pray
  Cursing the greed of Ormonde.

Proudly above Kilkenny town
  Towers the walls of Ormonde
I wander up and I wander down
  Over the Bridge of Ormonde.
My heart is broken, my hopes are dead
No roof to shelter a hoary head
But he lies soft on a down bed
  Safe in the palace of Ormonde!

The tyrant!—Safe! Ah that dread desire
My soul is seethed in hellish fire!
God rescue me from these whispers dire!
  Close by the gates of Ormonde.
Peaceful and still the waters flow
  Under the Bridge of Ormonde
Would that my tortured breast were so
  Here by the hall of Ormonde.

Mother of God! (the sweet words bless)
Hinder my hand from wickedness
Aid! oh aid me in dark distress
  Lone on the Bridge of Ormonde.

WHEN THE SHADOW'S ON THE HEATHER.

An Irish Christmas Ballad.

Slipping down the Curlew mountains to the early Christmas Mass,
When the shadow's of the heather and the rime is on the grass—
Want may chill our highland cottage; troubles bide with us alway.
But the Saviour makes us happy on his holy Christmas Day.

I must wake my dear ones early on this morn of peace and joy,
Little pet-lamb, pretty Norah, sturdy Neil, my noble boy,
When the hearth is clean and cosy and the dancing flames are gay,
And the kettle croons a welcome to the coming Christmas day.

Darkness lingers on the valley and the fairy-haunted glen,
Eastward now the break of morning brings the peace of God to men.
Near the mountain-rim,—first jewel of the Christ-Child's diadem,
Burns a star of radiant beauty like the Star of Bethlehem.

Wake ye now, my sleeping treasures, wake ye now, your mother's joy,
Pretty Norah, drowsy lambkin, blue-eyed Neil, my laughing boy—
For the shadow's on the heather, and the rime is on the grass,
And the angels hurry earthward to the early Christmas Mass.

See above you ivied abbey, where God's servants prayed of old,
Fiery pillars in the heavens—bars of silver, shafts of gold—
Swing the gates of glory open, shining souls unnumbered pass,
Let us hurry down to meet them at the early Christmas Mass.

Down the mountain, up the valley, from the riverside and glen
Throng the cheery-chatting people, stately women, stalwart men;
Guard, oh, guard them, God of Erin! bitter sorrow theirs, alas!
Many a heart shall bleed in exile ere another Christmas Mass.

Lift thy drooping face, my Erin, God has heard thy bitter moan,
Tho' His hand rest heavy on thee, 'tis to make thee more His own.
Faith has died where nations flourished,—earthy gain His gifts surpass
When he greets His gathered people at the early Christmas Mass.

THE HANGING OF MYLES LEHANE.

The Baron of Graine and Cavan, his heart was hard and cold,
He loved but his dogs and hunters—his god was greed of gold.
Said he: "For my pride and pleasure I'll have those broad lands free,
And he drove his serfs to the workhouse, or scourged them o'er the sea.
But Myles Lehane of Cashel went up to the Baron's door,
His heart like lead and bowed his head,—he never had begged before.
Said he, "for your honor's payment long years I've drudged like a beast,
'Twill break my heart from the land to part, but leave us the house at least,
For Nora, my wife, is dying,—the child is gone before,
'Twas fever killed our darling, so the neighbors come no more."

Then the Baron swore a sounding oath, and ordered the "dog" away,
And back thro' the rain went Myles Lehane to his woful house that day.

Next morning's sun rose grim and dun, and in thro' the valley's gate,
Like a river red the "Death Brigade" defiled in martial state.
Oh, bold and gay they looked that day, the Royal British Horse,
But they did a work would shame a Turk that spares not the senseless corse.
Their sabres clanked full gallantly, their hoof-beat echoed plain,
Till they came to halt with never a fault by the house of Myles Lehane,
And there they formed a *cordon*, all strict to the rules of war.
(Would they do so well to the Arab yell on Afric sands afar?)

Within his straw roofed cottage, his own no longer now,
Sat Myles Lehane deep-bowed in pain, cold fear-drops on his brow,
Dread were the thoughts he wrestled, but never uttered a sound,
The hand of God lay heavy on him—the wrath of men around.
His sick wife lay beside him, her life-tide ebbing fast,
And he prayed that ere the troops came there her spirit might have passed.
The damp, death-reek was on her cheek, the Priest was kneeling by,
But she heard outside the soldiers' stride, and pitiful was her cry:
"Oh, *wirra, wirra,** the bitter day! and have I lived so long,
And must I lie by the road to die, that never did man wrong!
Oh, Myles, my heart's light ever, come near and hold my hand,
'Twas gladsome May our wedding day and sunshine filled the land;

* Wirra, (lit.) Oh, Mary, Mary!

The birds sang gay our wedding day, the bending skies were blue,
And you were there my king of men, and I was fair to you.
Our joys and our heavy sorrows we shared them side by side,
When the crops and cattle prospered—when the son of our bosoms died;
But now when your blackest trouble is falling upon your head,
I must leave you, Myles, my husband, to be with the griefless dead.
Yet hear me, our God is mercy,—He judges the deeds of men;
I'll pray at His throne for you, my own, until we meet again."

Bang on the door a gun-butt—hurtled a hoarse command:
"Now, Myles Lehane, in the Queen's high name, give up your house and land."

The hinges burst like rot-wood, and in the
bailiffs strode,
"Now out with them, bag and baggage, to beg
their rent on the road!"
The priest stood up from the bedside, his tear-
filled eyes flashed fire—
"Oh, men, would ye shame your manhood to
do such deed for hire,
The wild beast chased and wounded may die
at last in his lair,
And would ye refuse like mercy to God's own
image there?"

Then spoke his lordship's agent,—a fiend in-
carnate he,—
"You'll leave the house my prating priest, and
curse her! so shall she,
No! fetch me the oil-can, hearties—we'll have
a bonfire good,
And crack our joke while the rats we smoke,
as loyal subjects should."

They bore her out on the roadside, they laid
her down to die,
The flames from the burning cottage leaped
fiercely to the sky.
But swifter on to the heavens the soul of a
woman went,
The angels found her a dwelling-place, and
never a word of rent.

II.

'Tis night in the gloomy valley, 'tis night on
the hillside drear,
Hark! heard ye a gunshot sounding—heard ye
a shriek of fear?
A [illegible]lerer flies in terror, his deed was done
too well—
The Baron of Graine and Cavan, his soul is
deep in hell!
A bullet has found its billet out there on the
lonesome moor,
No more he'll grind, in his anger blind, the
faces of God's poor.

And out on the widening ocean a swift ship flies e'en now
The winds blow fair, yet one they bear, with Cain-brand on his brow.

Now flash ye the news of horror to every land and clime,
And mark the race with deep disgrace whose sons have wrought such crime!
What tho' in peaceful England a thousand worse befall,
The Baron great had wealth and state and lived in princely hall,
But mind! no word of the woman—she died by deed of law,
We rule them strong, we may do wrong, but, look ye, find no flaw,
And find us a ready victim, it boots not whom nor how,
The outraged State must vindicate her injured Justice now.

They found ere long a victim—the proofs, they said were plain—
And Dublin's deep-walled dungeons soon closed on Myles Lehane.
Like Him of old, the Scourged One, he made no moan or cry;
They dragged him out in the blaze of noon and told him he must die.
"Now Myles Lehane, in your Maker's name, what word have you to say
With latest breath to the doom of death that falls on you today?"

The peasant knelt to Heaven, his hair gleamed white to the sun,
'My Lord, of the crime I'm guiltless; but God's high will be done!
I fear not to meet my Saviour—He promised the wronged redress;
The death I die is shameful, my shame than His far less.

Better to die and end it than live a trampled
slave
With never a breath of freedom—no hope but
the waiting grave.

The precious gold we drudge for buys feast
for a glutton's hall;
Better than life of torture, be robbed at once
of all."
Ah! Myles Lehane, of Cashel, dost hear thy
death-bell toll?
The grim black flag they've hoisted—Christ's
mercy on thy soul!
The guards drag forth their victim, the hang-
man stands in wait,
Like watchers by a death-bed, the people pray
at the gate.
The black mask veils his vision—he looked his
last on the sun,
Now God and the Virgin aid him—the awful
doom is done!

Thro' the grimy streets of Dublin the crowds
creep shuddering home,
And down from the Wicklow summits the
gusty rain-blasts come.
They weep through the darkened city to wash
its guilt away.
They tell to the sullen Irish Sea a tale of
shame today.

I saw a singer of ballads, he sang a song in
the street,
In the heart of Dublin City, 'mid bustle and
hurry of feet,
Men's cheeks flushed hot to hear him, and
women's went white with pain—
I've tried to sing you the song I heard—The
Hanging of Myles Lehane.

THE FAIRY-STOLEN.

An Irish Ballad.

Mother dear, my mother, they have stolen me away
And I miss you mother darling all the live-long day
When the dreamy sun is shining, and the fleecy clouds sail by,
You are weeping for me, mother, and I hear your bitter cry.
I wandered by the fairy Rath, I wandered all alone.

I played, nor thought of danger, by the haunted Ogam Stone
Till the fairies from Knocsheela came and carried me away
Where they live within the mountain in their palaces of clay.

Mother dear, oh mother, they have crowned
me Fairy Queen,
They have robed me in a vesture of the sun-
set's wondrous sheen,
They have dowered me with treasure that
their fairy castles hold,
But more precious to me mother your sweet
kiss than shining gold.

When the sun is on the mountain, and the
cloud shades come and go
And drowsy brooklets downward 'neath the
nodding hazels flow,
When the bee is in the fox-glove, and in covert
hides the hare,
Oh, look upon the mountain then, for mother,
I am there.

But when the night has fallen and the mystic
moonlight comes,
And darkly on the valley's breast the grey-
walled castle looms,
Oh then along the river's banks we're skip-
ping near and far
Till dawn with spears of silver drives away
the Morning Star.

'Twas but yesternight oh mother that we
passed the cottage by
Ah, my eager heart beat heavily to know that
you were nigh.
I saw the tears you shed for me, I heard your
troubled prayer,
But the fairy throng bore swift along, I
could not linger there.

Mother dear, my mother, I am dying day by
day,
They may hold my lifeless body, but my spir-
it will not stay,
It will seek you mother darling thro' the sun-
shine or the rain,
And the fairies of the mountain cannot steal
your child again.

ON KENMARE HEAD.

An Irish Ballad.

Sweet Mother of the Crucified
Be nigh to aid me now.
My old eyes view the sad gray sea
Beyond the cliff's high brow;
The wide, gray sea that sullenly
Beats on the black rocks bare,
The while I moan, bereft and lone,
On the Head of Old Kenmare.

Oh bitter day I lost for aye
The dear ones of my soul!
And cruel sea!—twixt them and me
How broad and bleak you roll!
Two graves are lying far away
With none to kneel in pray'r—
And I, their mother, weeping here
On the Head of Old Kenmare.

My Owen left our cabin door
A dreary winter day,
"Full quick I'll send ye gold galore
The heavy rent to pay."
Mo nuar! 'twas the killing word
They wrote from over there,—
"He's dying and his love he sends
To those in Old Kenmare."

Then Mary, treasure of my life—
How sweet her modest grace!
My timid lamb, she left me too
The hard world-winds to face.
Poor child, her heart was broken soon
With all a strange land's care;
They laid her by her brother's side
Far, far from Old Kenmare.

Now ever to my anguished soul
Their dying voices reach,
I hear them in the waves that roll
And sob along the beach.

I listen and the croon[illegible]g wi[illegible]
Those last love-whi[illegible]ers
To me, their moth[illegible]er, wait[illegible]one
On the Head of [illegible]ld K[illegible]nmare.

Sweet Mot[illegible]er [illegible] the Crucified,
Thy woes were greater far,
To thee an earthly mother prays
Who art the Ocean's Star.
Thou stand[illegible]by the awful Cross,
Oh strengthen me to bear
My sorrow swellin[illegible]like the sea
By the Head of [illegible]d Kenmare.

CNOC-MAOL-DHOUN.*

Ah! sweet is Avondhuv that flows by lordly
Cappoquin
And sighing low the south winds blow across
the Vale of Glin,
God's blessings on our Irish land, as well in
field and town,
But give me strength and let me stand on
Cnoc-Maol-Dhoun.

Now fairy hands are finding me and friendly
sprites are they,
Oh, fairy hands are binding me, "we'll bear
you up," they say;
"Come up where starry heather-flowers and
golden gorse encrown
The monarch of all fairy-mounds, our Cnoc-
Maol Dhoun."

* The brown Smooth Hill.—In County Waterford, Ireland.

I yield me to their magic spell, its power is not
gain-said,
We leave at once the lowly dell, and seek the
mountain's head,
I feel the breeze of ocean now, I smell the
fraoich brown,
And cooled the fever of my brow on Cnoc-
Maol-Dhoun.

Afar the shining Suir leaps Ardfinan's wood-
lands o'er,
Afar the thundrous billow sweeps thine echo-
ing wall Ardmore;
On sunny hill and misty vale my vision ranges
down,
And fancy teems with olden dreams, on Cnoc-
Maol-Dhoun.

On yonder plain, in war-array, I see the hosts
of Finn,
And mighty chiefs of ancient day,—I hear
their arms' din;
Famed Oisin of the Yellow Locks and Conan
of Renown,
Their shadows rise before mine eyes, on Cnoc-
Maol-Dhoun.

Pass Conall and the Red Branch Knights,—
and Maev, to conflict dire,
See great Cuculain, "Lord of Fights" his spear
a flame of fire.
A moment through the shifting mist sad Deir-
dre's face is shown,
Kind fairies grant the sight ye list, on Cnoc-
Maol-Dhoun.

Ah! poor in sordid wealth of gold, but rich is
Erin still
In magic spell and legend old, that cling to
heath and hill,
Dearer than gold a thousand fold, God's beau-
ties rare that crown,
The streams that flow thy heights below old
Cnoc-Maol-Dhoun.

LAMENT FOR CILL CEANNAIGH.

It is my bitter sorrow that the heavy-rolling main
Betwixt me and the land I love up-swells to mock my pain;
A weary load is on me that the Spring is here again—
And I far away from Kilkenny.

This cheerless exile, day by day, more grievously I rue,
And foreign skies grow dark to me recalling skies of blue,
Fade out, ye stretching city streets, and smile the fields I knew,
In the gold-misty vales of Kilkenny.

On Suir's banks the winds of March awake the
daffodil—
In sprouting groves by Clodagh's stream the
cuckoo's numbers thrill,
The saucy, sunny primroses in hollow and on
hill
Are scenting the gale of Kilkenny.

Oh ye that pass o'er heath and grass, all in the
morning dawn,
The heights to breast, your brows caressed
with breeze from Sliav-na-mon;
Till Suir shines in golden light, and every
shadow's gone,
Bless God that your home's in Kilkenny.

Along the winding country ways the haw-
thorn hedge is white,
The red breast from his mossy nest doth watch
you out of sight;
Oh, sweet the day in balmy May, and soft the
dewy night
That falls o'er my home in Kilkenny.

To list the ploughman's cheery voice,—the
bouchal's whistle call,
To hear the pure faced *cailins* sing that guide
the cows to stall;
To watch the stalwart hurlers leap and strike
the bounding ball,
Mo bhron that I'm far from Kilkenny.

There is a heather-belted hill lifts high its
summit bare—
And up its sides the pleasant fields are climb-
ing everywhere;
If I'd my way, 'tis there today I'd breathe the
blessed air,
And greet my old friends in Kilkenny.

O Erin, call thy scattered sons, and bid them
all unite—
"To long in alien wars ye bleed—unblest that
fruitless fight,
Arise again, unconquered men, do battle for
the right,
And free the fair homes of Kilkenny."

BALLAD OF THE BANSHEE.

Back thro' the hill I hurried home
  Ever my boding soul would say
"Mother and sister bid thee come
  Long, too long has been thy stay."

Stars shone out, but the moon was pale
  Touched by a black cloud's ragged rim
Sudden I heard the Banshee's wail
  Where Malmor's war-tower rises grim.

Quickly I strode across the slope
  Passed the grove and the Fairy Mound
(Gloomy the moat where blind owls mope)
  Scarcely breathing, I glanced around.

Mother of mercy! there she sat
  A woman clad in a snow-white shroud
Streamed her hair to the damp moss-mat
  White the face on her bosom bowed.

"Spirit of Woe," I eager cried,
  "Tell me none that I love has gone,"
"Cold is the grave": my accents died—
  The Banshee lifted her face so wan.

Pale and wan as the waning moon
  Seen when the sun-spears herald dawn
Ceased all sudden her dreary croon
  Full on my own her wild eyes shone.

Burned and seared my inmost soul
  (When shall sorrow depart from me?)
Black-winged terror upon me stole
  Blindly gaping, I turned to flee.

Back by the grove and haunted mound
O'er the lone road I know not how
Hearkened afar my baying hound
Home at last at the low hill's brow.

Lone the cottage—the door flung wide
Four lights burned—oh sight of dread!
Breathing a prayer, I rushed inside,
"Mercy, God!" 'twas my mother, dead!

Dead and white as the fallen leaf
(Kneeling my sister prayed near by)
Wild as I wrestled with my grief
Far and faint came the Banshee's cry.

THE RED WALLS OF LIMERICK.

A Brigade Ballad.

There's bitter woe in Erin since the Wild Geese sailed away,
The *clairseach* * sobs with sorrow now, that erst rang loud and gay;
Unheard the tramp of Sarsfield's Horse and D'Usson's bugle-bray.
Mo nuar! Mo nuar! the lost pride of Limerick!

The treaty is broken and our wrongs are unredressed,
A murdered peasant's hanging high on yonder mountain crest;
See there a starving mother, with a dead child to her breast.
Mo nuar! Mo nuar! the black woes of Limerick!

* Clairseach—the harp.

Go Dhia, but these deathly days hang like a
funeral pall
Mine eyes have seen the battle break 'gainst
belching fort and wall;
Dutch William's stormers stagger back from
shearing blade and ball.
Mo nuar! Mo nuar! the Red Walls of Lim-
erick!

How leaped our hearts when Lucan's Horse
swept by at thunderous pace!
How cheered we Dillon's dancing plume, and
Berwick's martial grace!
Ah! days indeed! Our tender maids feared not
grim death to face,
Mo nuar! Mo nuar! the lone homes of Lim-
erick!

But Sarsfield and his "Slashers" all have
sailed away to France,
On Europe's shaking battle-fields their fiery
chargers prance,
And Erin--hapless Erin, now has not one
guarding lance.
Mo nuar! Mo nuar! the dead hopes of Lim-
erick!

Broad Shannon's eddying waters hurry outward to the sea,
A hundred exile-bearing ships adown its wide gate flee!
Alone I wait the shadows of the night that is to be.
Mo nuar! Mo nuar! the lost cause of Limerick!

LAV-LAIDHIR ABU.

("About this time a great disgrace fell upon the noble family of O'Brien; for the chieftain Murrough, a man brave beyond compare, and of comely p[illegible]vent over to the English with part of his clan and waged war without mercy against his kinsmen and former friends. So terrible in sooth were his devastations that he thereafter was known to the Irish as 'Murrough the Burner.'")
Old Chronicler.

My head is bowed, and my heart is breaking,
My *Clairseach* dumb for my country's shame,
This burden black from my spirit shaking,
I'll strike again to an ancient name.
Lav-Laidhir Abu!
That shout thrilled many a field of fame,
Lav-Laidhir Abu!

A bard am I of a house dishonored;
A song unsaddened no longer mine;
Loud rang my harp amid hosts embannered,
When Erin's shield was the race of Brian.
Lav-Laidhir Abu!
Lord God, look down on a princely line,
Lav-Laidhir Abu!

Flash forth, Kincora, thy halls of glory,
Come, famed Clontarf, to my sad soul's sight,
A thousand fields where in battle gory
The Strong Hand wrestled for Erin's right.
Lav-Laidhir Abu!
Thrice cursed be he that its strength would blight,
Lav-Laidhir Abu!

Accursed be he upon plain and mountain,
Accursed again upon shore and wave,
Shame's hot breath poison his heart's life-fountain,
Shallow and red his polluted grave.
Lav-Laidhir Abu!
A haughty house, has it borne a slave?
Lav-Laidhir Abu!

Murrough the Burner! from Croome to Connaught
I see the smoke of your conquests rise;
Maddened with slaughter, your *kerne* and *bonnaght*
Affright out valleys with murderous cries.
Lav-Laidhir Abu!
The dumb beasts e'en from their presence flies,
Lav-Laidhir Abu!
Green bosomed Thomond, your bloom is faded,
Proud Cashel's portals your pride is fled,
Grim Murrough's butchers, by Satan aided,
Have made wide Desmond a house of dead.
Lav-Laidhir Abu!
But rise, ye clans to a vengeance dread!
Lav-Laidhir Abu!

Afar I hearken the banshee calling
Fierce Thommond's chief to his bloody tomb—
Murrough the Burner, the bolt is falling,
Thy gibbering victims around thee loom.
Lav-Laidhir Abu!
Meet for a traitor a traitor's doom,
Lav-Laidhir Abu!

THE MARCH OF THE "NORTH CORK."

A Ballad of '98.

The summer morn was breaking in the valley
of the Suir,
The first faint sunbeams quivered on the river
running pure,
When out from Carrick's olden walls a gay
battalion strode,
And twice five hundred bayonets filed down
the dusty road.

Black Horsley of Dunmanaway, he faced his
men and said;
"Our journey's goal is Wexford Town, our
road lies straight ahead;
There's booty there, and fame to win for every
yeoman true;
My faith! we'll teach the rebel hordes what
royal swords can do!"

On marched the North Cork Regiment, a gal-
land sight to see;
Their tall plumes fluttered in the breeze, their
bugles brayed with glee;
Past fair Mooncoin, past Granagh's tower,
past ancient Waterford,
And soon o'er Wexford's war-scarred fields
their crimson banner soared.

What fires are those that flash on high? What
shrieks that pierce the air?
'Tis not the flame of cannon's mouth, or battle-
trumpet's blare.
Oh Wexford! 'tis thy roofs that blaze, and
'tis thy women's cry;
Now up, and grasp thy gory pike the ven-
geance hour is nigh!

The mornings light was glancing bright on
many a gliding rill,
The rising sun was burnishing the slopes of
Culart Hill;

From storied Wexford's guarded gate a train
of yeomen passed—
They little dreamed the march that day was
fated for their last.

At noon on Culart's moss-clad height loud
rang the musketry
And Wexford flung upon the foe her peasant
chivalry,
Short shrift the ruffian spoilers found when
gleamed the dreaded pike,
For vengeance nerved the patriot's arm and
pointed where to strike.

Old Enniscorthy next saw fall the "rebel's"
blow of hate,
When fled the fear-struck yeomanry from fa-
mous Duffry Gate;
They fell as fall the ripened crops when tem-
pest lashed them down,
And few and pale the fugitives that entered
Wexford Town.

Such was the fate well-merited befell that fiendish crew
The ravishers of peaceful homes, the butchers of Carnew.
Light, Wexford, light thy triumph fires, till hill and valley glow
And bless thy peasant-warriors that never feared a foe!

The patriot flames they kindled then have never since grown cold,
Today in Bargy and Idrone are hearts that beat as bold,
And tho' the "Boys of Wexford" failed on fatal Vinegar Hill,
"They're ready for another fight and love their country still."

THE PIKEMEN.

A Ballad of '98.

The troops are out in Bargy and the yeomen in Idrone,
The pitch-caps and the gory lash make guiltless victims groan.
Red murder stalks the villages, and high the roof trees flame,
Arise ye, men of Wexford now, or live in lasting shame!
Ye pikemen, bold pikemen,
Old Wexford calls her pikemen.
See, at her call, they muster all,
For vengeance now, grim pikemen!

The plough they leave by Slaney's banks, the scythe in soft Imayle,
And out through famous Scollagh gap, they surge like autumn gale.

Bold hearts are there from Ballaghkeen and
wooded Shilmaliere.
Sends many a stalwart rifleman to fill the foe
with fear.
The pikemen, the pikemen,
The stormy-cheering pikemen,
Broad Barrow's flood shall flow with
blood,
Rush in, ye rebel pikemen!

Above on sunny Camarus the *fraioch*-blossoms
blow,
Grim massacre and pillage fright the fertile
vales below,
Rough Corrigrew is basking in the scented
summer gale,
In Gorey at the mountain-foot is heard the
maiden's wail.
Ye pikemen, brave pikemen,
Ha! tarry not, ye pikemen!
'Tis yours to quell that spawn of hell,
For hearths and homes, ye pikemen!

The morning sun is burnishing the slopes of
Culart Hill.
His low beam strikes on serried pikes, a sight
the soul to thrill.
Like flame athwart the ripened fields, from
Wexford's guarded gate
The "red North Cork"—their life-sands run-
march out to meet their fate.
The pikemen, the pikemen,
The dread, resistless pikemen,
Grim harvest now, on Culart's brow
They reap, the rebel pikemen.

High noon in Enniscorthy—from the far-
famed Duffry Gate
The tyrant's smoking cannon hurl their mes-
sengers of hate,
In vain, in vain, his bullets gain, and thunder
loud the guns,
Those ranks accursed, the pikemen burst—
old Wexford's dashing sons!
The pikemen, the pikemen,
They staggered from the pikemen,
Their black hearts feel
The patriot steel,
The vengeance of the pikemen.

The "ancient Briton's" went to death on Tubberneering's Plain,
The Irish green at Taghmon waved o'er many a foeman slain,
Oh, for an Owen Roe again to lead with Spanish steel!
From Wexford's bristling vanguard then, oppression's ranks should reel.
The pikemen, the pikemen,
A leader for the pikemen,
They heard with fear, your stormy cheer
Ye mocked at death, fierce pikemen!

'Tis true, alas, ye fought, and failed when stubborn Ross ran red,
The fatal slope of Vinegar Hill was matted with your dead.
Unconquered souls! your fame shall live while runs the rapid Nore,
All honor, deathless pikemen to your green graves evermore!
The pikemen, the pikemen,
When Erin needs her pikemen,
God send her then heroic men
Like Wexford's fearless pikemen.

SONG OF THE LITTLE VILLAGES.*

The pleasant little villages that grace the Irish glynns
Down among the wheat-fields,—up amid the whins,
The little white walled villages crowding close together,
Clinging to the Old Sod in spite of wind and weather:
Ballytarsney, Ballymore, Ballyboden, Boyle,
Ballingarry, Ballymagorry by the Banks of Foyle,
Ballylaneen, Ballyporeen, Bansha, Ballysadare,
Ballybrack, Ballinalack, Barna, Ballyclare.

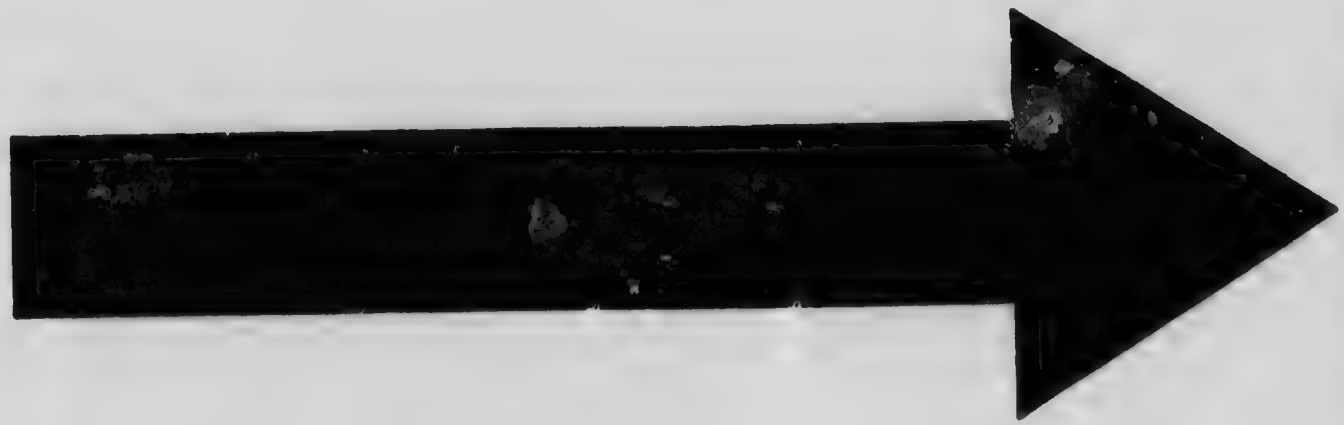
* All the names are genuine.

The cosy little villages that shelter from the mist,
Where the great West Walls by ocean-spray are kissed;
The happy little villages that cuddle in the sun
When blackberries ripen and the harvest work is done.
Corrymeela, Croaghnakeela, Clogher, Cahirciveen,
Cappaharoe, Carrigaloe, Cashel and Coosheen,
Castlefinn and Carrigtohill, Crumlin, Clara, Clane,
Carrigaholt, Carrigaline, Cloghjordan and Coolrain.

The dreamy little villages, where by the fire at night,
Old Shanachies with ghostly tale the boldest hearts affright;
The crooning of the wind-blast is the wailing Banshee's cry,
And when the silver hazels stir they say the fairies sigh.

Kilfenora, Kilfinnane, Kinnity, Killylea,
Kilmoganny, Kiltamagh, Kilronan and Kilrea,
Killashandra, Kilmacow, Killiney, Killashee,
Killenaule, Killmyshall, Killorglin and Killeagh.

Leave the little villages, o'er the black seas go,
Learn the stranger's welcome, learn the exile's woe,
Leave the little villages, but think not to forget
Afar they'll rise before your eyes to rack your bosoms yet.
Moneymore, Moneygall, Monivea and Moyne,
Mullinahone, Mullinavatt, Mullagh and Mooncoin,
Shanagolden, Shanballymore, Stranorlar and Slane,
Toberaheena, Toomyvara, Tempo and Stabane.



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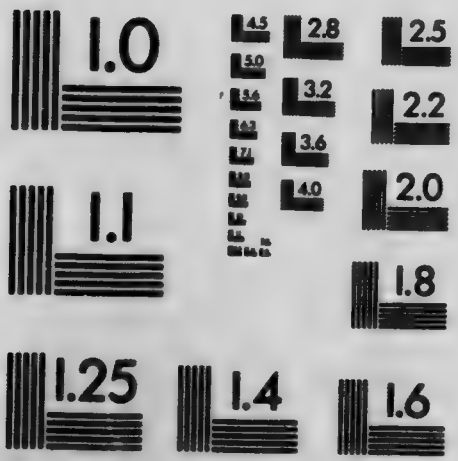

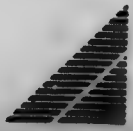

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1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

On the Southern Llanos,—north where strange light gleams,
Many a yearning exile sees them in his dreams
Dying voices murmur (passed all pain and care)
"Lo! the little villages, God has heard our prayer."
Lisdoonvarna, Lissadil, Lisdargan, Lisnaskea,
Portglenone, Portarlington, Portumna, Portmagee,
Clonegam and Clonegowan, Cloondara and Clonae,
God bless the little villages and guard them night and day!

THE SWEET RIVER SUIR.

". . . . The gentle Shure that making way
By sweet Clonmell, adorns rich Waterford."
Spencer's Faerie Queen, Book IV, Canto XI.

From Devil's Bit to Tuurles, from Golden unto Cahir,
By castle-crowned Ardfinan running pure
Past Carrick and Kilsheelan, ever sparkling, ever wheeling
Flow the waters of the sweet river Suir.

The Galtees and Sheveardagh send their tributes to its flood
The Anner comes from storied Sliav-na-mon
The sunshine and the shadows follow fast across the meadows
Till the dews o' the morn are gone.

By rich flowery fields of the pleasant golden vale
By broken Norman tower and hamlet white
The waters of the Suir saddest bosom would allure
As they dance in the sun's mellow light.

The winds croon and sob thro' ruined abbey walls
Low music floats from every fairy-mound
And weird, haunting rhymes of long-forgotten times
In the flowing of the Suir resound.

In cool, sheltered glens where glossy hazels nod
The wild linnet thrills a joyful lay
The thrush and blackbird singing, sweetest melodies are flinging
Thro' brier-scented groves all day.

'Tis there now I'd be, for my heart is ever there,
Where Tippreary and Kilkenny plains stretch out
Where the rival Gaels are dashing, and the stalwart hurlers' clashing
Is heard above the throng's great shout.

Ah fair is Killarney, where the smile of God is seen
But when this life is ended and dust with dust
And dear to me thy woodlands Glenmalure is blended
Let me rest by the sweet river Suir.

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